1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

THE LAUAN AS AN INDIVIDUAL

INFANCY

There is no word for baby in the Fijian language, only for a small child. The baby sleeps with its mother until eighteen months or two years old.

Women shape the child's head to be round (*vatu vinaka*) by placing a bit of cloth in their hands and pressing the head with it. This is usually done by the grandmother, who plays a large part in caring for the baby. Formerly ladies had nurses who fed the child and carried it about. They were paid by the father and received a share in any festival.

Most Fijian babies appear very helpless and apathetic. They are suckled until a late age, about eighteen months to two years. While some children are strong and grow fast, "the body hurries and disease seizes it." Fijian children sit alone at five months, crawl at six to seven months; at seven months they raise the knee; at eight, begin to stand up. Some toddle at eleven to twelve months, some much later. Their speech develops in proportion with their actions.

A Lauan baby is never crossed unless it is absolutely necessary; on the other hand, little is done to amuse it. The babies seldom laugh, or even smile.

CHILDHOOD

Discipline

Boys sleep with the mother until nine or ten years of age, when they sleep in the young men's quarters (*mbure*).

Children take to clothing by degrees and at their own discretion, especially the boys; the girls soon take to little gowns because they are not so easily thrown off. Boys even at the age of ten or eleven often discard their cloth when running, but gradually accept it as permanent apparel, though wearing it as short as possible, or as a loin cloth between the legs when running.

The hair of babies is closely cropped, that of older children is allowed to grow into many curious fashions—a mop on the top of the head, a coxcomb from forehead to poll. About the age of ten, many boys wear a broad tuft called *tombe* on the forehead, the remainder of the head being cropped close. At about the thirteenth or fourteenth year, the hair is allowed to grow uniformly, and becomes the object of increasing care. Little girls sometimes have their hair cropped except for a little tuft on the prominence on each side of the head.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

given a steam bath in the house. In a special oblong wooden bathing bowl (*kumete ni silisili*) are placed cut *waro* leaves. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam by one of the *songone*. When the leaves cease to give forth steam, the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel. No men are allowed in the house during the process.

The most important birth feast is the *i mburua ni ngone*, which is usually held on the first or second day after the birth of any child. It may, however, be held on any day up to the tenth. This feast for a first-born, whether boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subsequent child. The earth ovens of the father's and the mother's clans are used, but for subsequent children only the oven of the father's clan. If the family is prominent, the birth feast is large and attended by the whole village, if not the feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided and attended by the mother's clan only.

Twins are desirable in Lau. Twin boys are called *ndrua tamata*; twin girls, *ndrua alewa*.

If a child is stillborn (*suthu mate*) the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights, for it would be harmful to the mother to take it away sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness called *tandoka*, characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Stillbirths are buried in the cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. The destiny of the souls of stillbirths is not clear to the natives. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in the same grave. Their souls go to Nai Thimbathimba (p. 114). In miscarriage the foetus is kept two nights and then buried in the cemetery without ceremony.

When the child is born the father moves out of the house and sleeps in a men's house belonging to his clan until the child is weaned. Sexual intercourse with his wife is tabu during this period, but the father frequently has clandestine affairs with the women of the village who do not stand in the tabu relationship with him.

Feces of the infant are wrapped in tapa and kept in an excrement basket (*kato nda*) which hangs on the wall of the house where the child lives. This is done because they are a part of the child and removing them would cause the child to have diarrhea. For the first child the basket must be kept 100 days, after which the father throws it over the reef into the sea. The spot where it sinks is marked with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until the ceremony, called *mangitchi ni ona singa*, is held when the child is one year old. If the father erects a tabu stick he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige and to that of the child. If the parents cannot provide food for a big feast, they simply throw the basket into the sea without declaring a tabu. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows he is gaining strength, usually two

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

or three months. It is discarded in the sea without a tabu. This custom of *kato nda* which is common on Fulanga is not found on all the islands.

A feast called *mangitchi ni ona singa*, which is held when the first-born is one year old, is not held for subsequent children. If the child's parents are prominent this is a large feast, marked by an affinal exchange of property. The child is bathed in the sea for the first time on this day. The ceremony is divided into two parts, the "bathing" and the "drying" rites. The bathing rites (*mangitchi ni sili ki wai levu*) are held on the beach by the women of the mother's clan. The mother's older sister, who is in charge, collects property (*i suai ni sili*) from the mother's clan, bathes the child or chooses another woman to do so, and distributes the portion of the *singa* feast which is eaten by the women on the beach. The father's older sister, who has charge of the drying rites, collects property (*vaka mamatha*) from the father's clan. Parents of the child receive no share of this property which is ceremonially exchanged and divided between the relatives.

On Namuka the first part of the ceremony (*i silisili ki wai levu*) is held when the child is about four months old and the second part (*mangitchi ni ona singa*) is held on his first birthday.

Another important ceremony for the first-born is the *mangitchi ni kana mbaletchi*. It may be held at any time within the first year. On Fulanga this feast is held on the third day after birth. Formerly when the child was of a prominent family, this feast was attended by the whole village. Today it is a clan feast only. The clan members gather in the house of the oldest living male relative in the child's clan. The child is presented to the clan elder by his paternal grandmother, if she is living, or by his father's or his mother's sister. The elder sits on the mat with the child on his lap and food or kava is placed before him. He reaches over the child for food or for a drink and brings it to his mouth. Before the elder eats over the child, no one may do so, not even the child's mother, but afterward anyone may. A small feast is held by the relatives and property is presented to the elder by the child's parents.

In high ranking families a small household feast, called feast of the first tooth (*mangitchi ni vaka votu ni mbatchi*), is held for the first child's first tooth. When the child begins to crawl another small feast, called feast of the little old man (*mangitchi ni nggasinggasi*), is held. The last two feasts are rarely observed in southern Lau.

A small household feast called *mangitchi ni papi* or *mangitchi ni mbaptiso* is held for every child at baptism into the mission church.

BOYS' PUBERTY

During my residence in Lau no boys' initiation ceremonies were held. The following information was obtained from natives on Kambara, Namuka, Mothe, and Fulanga.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

285 352 with wefts 3 mm. wide. It had a border of black geometric designs and a wool fringe.

A kava mat (*yambe ni yanggona*) is slightly larger and coarser than a baby mat. It is unornamented.

An eating mat is long and narrow with coarse weave. One used in the high chief's household in Lakemba was about 28 meters long and 3 meters wide, with wefts 2 cm. wide. The edges were fringed with pandanus.

285 531 *Yambe volavola* are pandanus mats decorated with black geometric designs in twill or check weave made with wefts dyed black. The designs are placed across the entire surface of the mat in lengthwise or diagonal bands or lines, at the corners of the mat in triangles, or around the edge of the mat as a border (fig. 18). The designs are named. A zigzag line is called *wangga ni vasua* because it resembles the *vasua*, a shellfish. A border composed of short [386] parallel diagonal lines is called *somovuni*. The black dye (*somo*) is made of *sikethi* (p. 89).

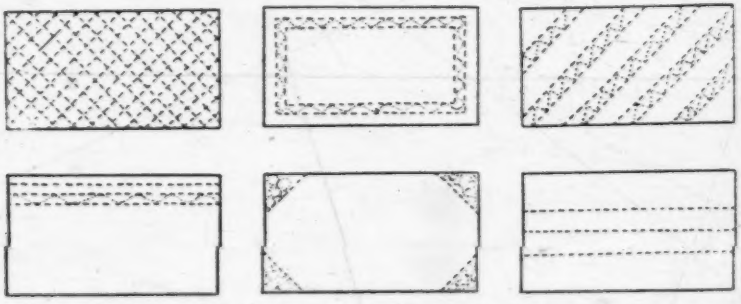

FIGURE 18.—Sketches of mats, showing design placement.

285 [854] According to aged informants, a very soft mat, called *latha*, was formerly used as a sling to carry infants on the back or the hip. The *latha* was of fine weave and about 2 meters long and 45 cm. wide.

[292] Another fine mat, the *tawala*, was formerly used as a dancing kilt. One corner of the mat was bent down and the mat was tied around the waist with a piece of barkcloth or sennit. Old mats worn by mourners are also called *tawala*.

[622] A very fine, white mat, called *tawake*, was tied to the mast of a chief's canoe as a flag or emblem of rank.

[237] Natives say that mat fringe, although called *kula* (red parakeet), was formerly made of rooster feathers or of the inner bark of the *sitchi* in southern Lau. The feathers from the red parakeet were used to fringe mats in the Moala group but not in southern Lau, according to informants.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

accompanied by her mother or another near relative. The group of relatives who sleep in her house go fishing to secure sea food for a small feast for which the father provides the garden produce. On this day the midwife, if she is not a close relative, is presented with barkcloth or mats. The barkcloth in which the newborn infant has been wrapped is removed for the first time and the child is given a steam bath in the house. No men are allowed to be present. Leaves of a certain plant (called *varo*) are placed in a special oblong wooden bowl. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam. When the leaves cease to give forth steam the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel.

On Fulanga the feces of the infant during the first few months are wrapped in barkcloth and kept in a basket hung on the wall of the house. The natives say they are still a part of the child and discarding them would injure him. If the basket of excrement is removed too soon the child will have diarrhoea. For the first child the basket must be kept longer than for subsequent children. After 100 days the father throws the first child's basket over the reef into the sea, and frequently marks the spot with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until after the ceremony which celebrates the child's first birthday. The father does not need to erect a tabu stick, but if he does so he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige, as well as that of the child and of his clan. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows that he is gaining strength. It is discarded in the sea without a tabu and no ceremony is held on the child's first birthday.

On all the islands a feast is held when the first child is one year old. If the parents' and child's clan are prominent, this is a large feast, marked by the ceremonial exchange of mats, barkcloth and other property between the father's and the

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

852 431 602 [854] mother's clans. The property is divided between the relatives, and the child's parents receive no share. On this day[1] the child is bathed in the sea for the first time.

539 CHILDHOOD ON KAMBARA

Mothe, mothe, ko yandra, yandra,
Vuka mai na lupe ni wasa,
Ke lupe ndina, ke mothe manda-e.

Sleep, sleep, and wake, wake,
The dove of the waves comes flying.
If he is a true dove he will sleep-*e*.

Lauan lullaby.

854 593 For the first year the mother and child live in a predominately feminine world. Since the father's work takes him to the gardens, the bush and the reef during the day, and to the earth oven in the late afternoon, and since he sleeps in another house at night, he sees the mother and child only at the evening meal and occasionally during the day. Throughout the nursing period, which lasts about one year, the father's chief rôle in the cooperative enterprise of parenthood is the provision of food. He takes little part in the baby's life until the child is old enough to run. If the father does pick the child up he carries him in his arms or on his back, never in a sling, which is used only by women. One is more likely to see the grandfather than the father with the infant on his lap. The father, however, is proud of the child, especially if he is the first born.

854 462 [162] During the nursing period the mother has practically nothing to do except care for and play with the infant. She is relieved of her usual tasks, such as fishing, gathering greens, and tending the kitchen fires, by the other women and girls of her sub-clan. Since the females outnumber the males there are always hands to do the comparatively small amount of work that falls to the women. Unmarried girls fish and gather greens and firewood for the kitchen. They also grate and strain coconut for coconut cream. Older women, with

[1] [i.e., the first child's first birthday.—Analyst]

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

the help of the girls, prepare the greens by removing the leaves from the stems, and attend to the boiling.

Mother and child are practically inseparable. The mother rarely goes out of the village, but spends most of her time with other women in one of the kitchen houses of her clan, her baby on her lap or close beside her. Sometimes she strolls leisurely through the village to see a relative, her infant slung on her back or over one hip in a piece of cloth or barkcloth, which has been slipped under one arm and over the opposite shoulder and knotted over the chest. The mother plays with her baby, talks to him, and pets him. Long before the child is able to stand she amuses herself by propping him up against her breasts, his feet on her lap. Moving his little body rhythmically in imitation of the dance, she chants to him. She calls him "little pig" and sings lullabies to put him to sleep. At night the child sleeps beside her on the mat.

The mother usually suckles the baby whenever he cries, which may be three or four times in one hour. He is allowed to nurse as long as he cares to. If she is sitting with flexed legs crossed in front she lays the child across her lap. While sucking her right breast he is supported by her right arm, her left hand upholding the lower end of her breast. During the process of nursing the mother often rocks the child by rhythmically moving the flexed leg on which he rests. If she is lying down she lays the child beside and facing her, places the sling she uses for carrying him in a wad under his head, and gives him her breast. The child is not interrupted to change breasts nor is the breast withdrawn until he rejects it. The weaning process is gradual and without shock to the child. At the age of three or four months he is fed baked papaw or raw mango, usually half-ripe, in a casual fashion. Now and then bits of baked sweet potato or breadfruit are slipped into his mouth. Gradually he eats more and more solid food until, at the age of about one year he is fully weaned. I did not observe any child sucking his thumb.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

854 The infant is petted and encouraged by all his female relatives. When he cries his wishes are usually fulfilled. He becomes accustomed to the presence of people, noise, and light, and under these conditions he falls asleep, wakes, and sucks. As a result, a healthy child does not cry often or long, but is placid, good-natured, and content. He likes attention, and responds to it with a smile. He is spoiled by his grandmother, [857] especially if he is the first born, and he is often played with and carried about by little girls of nine or ten. The growth and 856 development of the child are a matter of interest to his relatives who discuss and make much of his first tooth, his learning to crawl, stand, and walk. If the child is slow in learning to stand he is taken, according to the natives, to the beach where a hole is dug in the sand. He is placed in the hole in standing position and buried up to his chest. The child remains in this position for some time. This is done almost every day until he is able to stand.

854 As the child learns to walk he gradually shows more independence. He spends more time with his relatives apart from his mother and with the children of his own age group. Very early he begins to feel his way into the behavior patterns toward his kin, and the ties between the child and his grandparents grow closer. He learns to call his grandmother by the 854 pet name, *tutu*. His grandparents become a refuge to him, for 603 he knows that they will always welcome him and protect him from the scolding and ill temper of his parents.

Occasionally at this age a child who is the first born goes to live in the house of his paternal grandparents. While we were in Tokalau, little Peni Lawathi, between one and two years of age, lived with his paternal grandparents and their three unmarried daughters. He was a bright responsive child, the first born of his generation. Some relative was always playing or joking with him. He was demanding. He was rarely with his mother or widowed maternal grandmother,

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

both of whom lived in the house next to his paternal grandparents.

Soon the child recognizes in his father the most important person in the household. He is a little afraid of him and begins to respect him. He learns not to touch or take anything pertaining to the person of his father—his mat, pillow, comb, or *lavalava*. He knows that if he, his brothers and sisters, or his mother disobey his father they will be scolded, perhaps whipped. At the same time he admires his father and is delighted by any attention from him. He calls him by the pet name, *tata*. His father does not play with him often, but occasionally he takes the child on his back to attend a meeting or to visit a neighbor.

Up to this time there has been little or no distinction between a boy and a girl. Both have been equally welcomed into the community, feted, nursed, and petted. Now a sex distinction becomes apparent. As the little boy grows older he is more frequently seen in the company of his father than is his sister. Occasionally he is taken on his father's back to the garden, while the little girl remains in the village with the women. Within the father-child relationship pattern there is considerable individual variation. Some fathers show a great deal of affection toward their children. The headman of Undu village played with his small offspring of both sexes often, and was rarely seen about the village without one or two babies on his back or on his lap. Some fathers are very much attached to their first born sons. The jealous antagonism, which later becomes marked between father and grown son, is not apparent when the boy is a child. The child treats his uncles in much the same way as he treats his father. His "big" fathers (the father's older brother and the mother's older brother) are honored more than the rest.

The child's attitude of increasing respect toward his father contrasts with his attitude of familiarity toward his mother. Although no longer physically dependent upon her, he con-

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

593 tinues to play with her and with her personal property. His
854 mother's subordinate position to her husband and the adult
562 males in the household reinforces this behavior pattern, as does also the general status of women in the community. The mother continues to be lenient toward him unless she is in a bad mood, when she is likely to fly into a rage at a trifle.

855 One day while talking to Kama in my house at Tokalau,
603 we were interrupted by the screams of his three-year-old
593 granddaughter. Pursued by Lute, her mother, who carried a stick, the terrified child was running in the direction of my house. Lute, six months pregnant, was walking with a determined stride and gaining ground. Kama called to his granddaughter to come to him but not hearing him, she turned and ran around the next house. He left my house, and, calling the child by name, walked toward the pair who had now rounded the house and were again approaching. This time the child noticed him and ran to him. When Lute caught up with them Kama calmly and resolutely raised his hand and slapped Lute's face. She turned and walked away and he, comforting the child, brought her back with him to my house.

855 On another occasion I heard the screams of a child issuing from a neighboring kitchen house. A woman in a tantrum was whipping a child with a stick. She stopped until his screams abated, then whipped him again. This was repeated with morbid viciousness three or four times until a relative snatched the child away.

However, a child is not whipped often. If he takes forbidden property or fails to show respect where it is due he is scolded or slapped. If he is bubbling his lips the mother will
[863] remove his hand or slap him for it. He is not allowed to defecate in the house, but if he does so on the house platform or in front of the house, he is usually ignored. Gradually he learns to go to the beach or the bush. Infants sleep on baby mats, which are washed and sunned rather frequently. One